DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 024 TM 830 052

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TITLE	North York Self Concept Inventory: Secondary School Norms. Research Report.
INSTITUTION	North York Board of Education, Willowdale (Ontario).
PUB DATE	Apr 78
NOTE	22p.; For related documents, see TM 830 051-053.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Techniques; Foreign Countries; Scores; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Students; *Self Concept Measures; *Self Esteem; Student Evaluation; *Test Construction; *Test Norms
IDENTIFIERS	Canada; *North York Self Concept Inventory (Crawford)

ABSTRACT

The norms are reported for the North York Self Concept Inventory, developed for secondary school students. The 25-item instrument is meant to examine aspects of self-esteem related to the school environment, self or peers, with high discriminatory power between high- and low-scoring groups of students. Development of the instrument and norms for each of grades 10, 11, 12, and 13 for both general and advanced level students are provided. The items are declarative statements of self-concept requiring "true" or "not true" responses. Students in the pilot testing were randomly selected by classes in nine North York secondary schools. The statistical results and distribution of scores at each grade level are presented with student comments on the pilot testing. Five suggestions for classroom activities to improve self concept are described. The appendix contains a copy of the instrument. (CM)

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NORTH YORK BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH REPORT

ED226024

NORTH YORK SELF CONCEPT INVENTORY

SECONDARY SCHOOL NORMS

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April, 1978

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Introduction

For some years, it has been known that self-esteem is significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning. The achievement of a favourable attitude towards oneself has been regarded as an important part of a student's ability to function successfully in school.

Many educators in North York have, over the past few years, expressed interest in and concern for their student's feelings about themselves. Responding to this interest, Research Department Staff have developed paper and pencil inventories designed to provide a measure of a pupil's self-esteem within the school environment. These instruments were suitable for elementary and junior high school pupils.[1]

Recognizing the need for an instrument suitable for secondary school students and responding to requests for such an inventory, Research Staff have developed a secondary school self concept inventory. This report describes the development of that instrument and provides norms for each of grades 10, 11, 12 and 13 for both general level and advanced level students. Also included is a section describing ways in which teachers can enhance their students' self-esteem.

Development of the Inventory

The preliminary pool of items was drawn from three existing self concept inventories, the IOX Self Appraisal Inventory, Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory and Comfort's Self-Esteem Scale, which were administered to a group of North York Secondary School students in grades 10, 11, 12 and 13. The preliminary form consisted of 28 items. In selecting the items for inclusion in the final version of the inventory, the following two conditions were imposed.

1) the content of the item must deal mainly with aspects of self-esteem related to the school environment or feelings about self or peers.

2) the item must demonstrate a high degree of discriminatory power between high scoring and low scoring groups of students by using a test analysis procedure.[2]

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1 Shapson, S.M., Virgin, A.E. & Crawford, Patricia. Development of an Instrument to Measure Self Concept in Schools. October, 1971.

Taylor, Wayne. North York Self Concept Inventory, Junior High Norms. April, 1973.

Crawford, Patricia. Norms for the North York Self Concept Intentory, Intermediate and Primary Levels. July, 1977.

2 Stanley, Julian C. Measurement in Today's Schools. Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. p. 200-201.

Based upon these criteria, three items in the preliminary form which did not significantly discriminate between students with high and low self concept scores were eliminated. The final version of the inventory, consisting of 25 items, was established for use by the schools in early 1978.

Description of the Inventory

The North York Secondary School Self Concept Inventory (see Appendix) is comprised of 25 items which are declarative statements, e.g., "Most of the time I enjoy school". "I often wish I had more friends". Students were asked to indicate whether they feel each statement is "true" or "not true" for them. One point is given for each response which indicates a positive self concept. The scores on the inventory can range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 25. It can be administered in 15 minutes and easily scored by a classroom teacher.

Norm Sample

The students in the pilot testing were randomly selected by classes in nine secondary schools across the borough. The schools were selected to represent a cross section of the borough by area.

RESULTS

Norms by Grade Level

Table 1 contains the overall mean and standard deviation for each of grades 10, 11, 12 and 13 as well as the number of students tested at each grade.

TABLE 1

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION ON THE NORTH YORK SECONDARY SCHOOL SELF CONCEPT INVENTORY

	Grades			
	10	11	12	13
Mean	16.40	17.76	17.09	18.50
Standard Deviation	4.78	4.18	4.46	4.47
Sample Size	215	180	299	11

Norms by Grade (10 to 12) and Program Level

The following tables 2, 3 and 4 contain the mean and standard deviation for each of grades 10 to 12, according to general level and advanced level programs.

TABLE 2

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION BY PROGRAM LEVEL FOR GRADE 10

General Level	Grade 10
Mean	16.35
Standard Deviation	4.94
Sample Size	67
Advanced Level	
Mean	16.42
Standard Deviation	4.72
Sample Size	148

TABLE 3

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION BY PROGRAM LEVEL
FOR GRADE 11

General Level	Grade 11
Mean	16.41
Standard Deviation	4.65
Sample Size	65
Advanced Level	
Mean	17.80
Standard Deviation	4.27
Sample Size	115

TABLE 4

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION BY PROGRAM LEVEL
FOR GRADE 12

General Level	Grade 12
Mean	16.02
Standard Deviation	4.72
Sample Size	86
Advanced Level	
Mean	17.53
Standard Deviation	4.29
Sample Size	213

The following tables 5 to 11 can be used to assess an individual student's relative position with respect to other students at the same grade level. The possible range of scores, 0-25, has been divided into nine intervals. The second column in each table gives the percentage of students tested who received a score in a particular interval. The third column gives the cumulative percent. Thus, for example, from Table 5 it can be seen that 21% (column 2) of the grade 10 students at the general level received a score of 12, 13 or 14 and that 35% (column 3) of the grade 10 students received a score of 14 or less (21+7+3).

TABLE 5

GRADE 10 - GENERAL

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	3	100
21 - 23	22	97
18 - 20	28	75
*15 - 17	12	47
12 - 14	21	35
9 - 11	7	14
6 - 8	4	7
3 - 5	3	3
0 - 2	0	0

*Mean 16.4

TABLE 6

GRADE 10 - ADVANCED

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	3	100
21 - 23	21	97
18 - 20	22	76
*15 - 17	21	54
12 - 14	16	33
9 - 11	11	17
6 - 8	4	6
3 - 5	1	2
0 - 2	1	1

*Mean 16.4

TABLE 7

GRADE 11 - GENERAL

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	2	100
21 - 23	20	98
18 - 20	30	78
*15 - 17	22	48
12 - 14	9	26
9 - 11	7	17
6 - 8	10	10
3 - 5	0	0
0 - 2	0	0

*Mean 16.4

TABLE 8

GRADE 11 - ADVANCED

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	11	100
21 - 23	20	89
*18 - 20	26	69
15 - 17	20	43
12 - 14	15	23
9 - 11	6	8
6 - 8	1	2
3 - 5	1	1
0 - 2	0	0

*Mean 17.8

TABLE 9

GRADE 12 - GENERAL

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	1	100
21 - 23	14	99
18 - 20	23	85
*15 - 17	21	62
12 - 14	21	41
9 - 11	13	20
6 - 8	7	7
3 - 5	0	0
0 - 2	0	0

*Mean 16.0

TABLE 10

GRADE 12 - ADVANCED

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	7	100
21 - 23	22	93
*18 - 20	23	71
15 - 17	25	48
12 - 14	15	23
9 - 11	4	8
6 - 8	4	4
3 - 5	0	0
0 - 2	0	0

*Mean 17.5

TABLE 11

GRADE 13

Interval of Scores	% of Sample in Interval	Cumulative %
Above 23	16	100
21 - 23	22	84
*18 - 20	24	62
15 - 17	18	38
12 - 14	13	20
9 - 11	2	7
6 - 8	3	5
3 - 5	2	2
0 - 2	0	0

* Mean 18.5

Student Comments

Seven hundred students completed a comment page during the pilot testing of the questionnaire. From their comments the following information was gathered.

- 71% felt that the questions were "about right" in difficulty.
- 92% responded that they understood all the questions that were asked.
- 79% stated that they felt that the questions asked were not too personal.
- 57% stated that they would be willing to put their name on the questionnaire.

The comments concerning identification of the student's name was the only area where a significant number (40%) stated negative feelings. This fact would lead us to issue a caution to users of this inventory.

1) The students should be guaranteed that their responses will be held in confidence by the teacher.

2) No student should be forced to identify himself or herself on this inventory.

Statements were made by students on this topic such as:

- I prefer to keep my feelings private, i.e., if friends and/or teachers knew what I said, they would think differently about me.
- Teachers should know how students feel so that they can help you.
- Too personal - you have to help yourself, the school can't help.
- It's good to know about yourself, I'm not ashamed of how I feel.

These statements lead the authors to believe that at the secondary school level, one cannot force help on students, they have to be willing to ask for it. By stating the reasons for giving the inventory and assuring confidentiality, teachers should find most students are willing to put their name on the paper.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING STUDENT SELF-ESTEEM

In his book, The Antecedents of Self-Esteem, Dr. Stanley Coopersmith defined self-esteem as follows:

> "by self-esteem we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy". In short, self-esteem is a "personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individial holds toward himself".
> (Coopersmith, 1967, p.5).

There is considerable evidence that students are unlikely to achieve competence in school or to have effective relationships with peers and adults if they do not have a healthy self-concept. Dr. Coopersmith maintains that self-esteem is a better predictor of a student's future success in school than intelligence.

Some ideas or suggestions as to how to improve or maintain the positive self concept of students can be found on the following pages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE SELF CONCEPT

1. Success Sharing

One way to help students focus on the positive aspects of themselves is to have them publicly share their accomplishments with the group.

In small groups of five or six, or with the entire class, ask the students to share a success, accomplishment, or achievement they had before they were ten years old. Next ask them to share a success they had between the ages of ten and fifteen; then between the ages of fifteen to the present time. (Obviously, these age ranges will need to be revised depending upon the ages of the students in your class.)

At first some students may have difficulty remembering some of their earliest successes, but as others share theirs, they will recall their own. Those with extremely low self concepts often report that they haven't had any successes. If this happens, you will need to help prod the students with questions such as:

> Well, you've been taking care of your younger brothers and sisters for two years; I consider that an accomplishment!
>
> Can you remember when you learned to ride your bicycle? Did you feel good about that achievement?

2. Resumé

Explain to the students the function of a resumé in job seeking. If you have a copy of a resumé available, share it with your students. Brainstorm with the students some possible categories (scholastic achievements, hobbies, athletic successes, skills they have attained, jobs they have held, etc.) they could use in creating a resumé for themselves. Then ask them to imagine a job they would like to hold. Have them share their choices with the class. Ask them to list the past accomplishments, personal strengths, and skills they have that they would "sell" to their prospective employer or interviewer in order to secure the job. Have them create a resumé and role-play such an interview.

3. Killer Statements and Gestures

Conduct a class discussion around the following questions:

> Have you ever worked very hard at something you felt was not understood or appreciated? What was it? What was said or done that made you feel your effort was not appreciated?
>
> Have you ever wanted to share things - ideas, feelings, something you've written or made - but were afraid to? Were you afraid that people might put you down? What kinds of things might they say or do that would put you, your ideas or your achievement down?

Introduce the concept of "killer statements and gestures" to the students. All of us have many feelings, thoughts, and creative behaviours that are killed off by other people's negative comments, physical gestures, etc. Some killer statements that are often used (even by teachers) are:

> We don't have time for that now.
> That's a stupid idea. You know that's impossible.
> You're really weird!
> Are you crazy? retarded? kidding me? serious?
> Only girls/boys do that!
> Wow, he's strange, man, really strange!
> That stuff's for sissies.

Tell students that they're going to be social science researchers for the day. Ask them to keep a record of all the killer statements they hear in school, at lunch, after school and at home. Discuss the findings with them during the next class.

4. Getting to Know You

Sharing information with other people about yourself and learning about others is a valuable experience. When you don't know something about someone, you tend to fill in the vacuum with assumptions. This can lead to misunderstandings especially if the person is different because of background or culture origins. It is important to know the "who" and "why" and "what" about fellow students if we are to work with them in a appreciative manner and maintain or build their self-esteem.

We have listed below a series of questions that can be used in several different ways. Students can be asked to pick a partner and answer some or all of these questions. You could give them the entire list on a duplicated sheet, write it on the blackboard, or just use a few of the questions. You can also have students pick a partner, answer one or two questions chosen by you, and them pick another

partner, and so on. This way each person gets to know a little more about a lot of other people. You could also use these questions in small groups of four to six students.

The questions listed below work best with teenagers and adults.

How would your parents have described you as a child (age 6 to 12)?

What was your favourite possession as a child?

What were you most proud of as a child?

What was your childhood nickname and how did you feel about it?

Do you like your first name now? If not, what would you like instead?

What is your favourite possession now?

Can you name a favourite possession you no longer possess, and describe your feelings about no longer having it?

What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you?

What is the silliest thing you have ever done?

What is the stupidest thing you have ever done?

What is your all-time favourite movie? Why does it have special meaning for you?

What is your favourite book? What in it has personal meaning for you?

What do you look for in a friend?

Name something you hate to do. What do you hate about it?

What in life is most important to you?

5. Positive Reinforcement

The best system of positive reinforcement is to evaluate a student's work from the viewpoint of what is right with it rather than from that of what is wrong with it. Show the student what he has going for him. Point out his strengths. Show him how he can develop his strengths; that is, treat error in the context of nurturing capacity rather than as a process of revealing weaknesses. The student already knows his weaknesses. Now he needs to know that he can do something about them.

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APPENDIX

SECONDARY SCHOOL

THIS IS A QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGNED TO DETERMINE
HOW STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT THEMSELVES AND SCHOOL

DIRECTIONS:

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE A SERIES OF STATEMENTS PEOPLE SOMETIMES USE TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES. PLEASE READ EACH STATEMENT CAREFULLY AND DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT IT IS TRUE FOR YOU.

IF YOU THINK A STATEMENT IS TRUE FOR YOU OR DESCRIBES HOW YOU FEEL MOST OF THE TIME, CHECK THE TRUE SQUARE. IF YOU THINK A STATEMENT IS NOT TRUE FOR YOU OR DOES NOT DESCRIBE HOW YOU FEEL MOST OF THE TIME, CHECK THE NOT TRUE SQUARE.

THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS, ONLY YOU CAN TELL US HOW YOU FEEL.

Board of Education for the Borough of North York

Department of Educational Research and Development

	TRUE	NOT TRUE
1. MOST OF THE TIME I ENJOY SCHOOL.	A	B
2. I AM POPULAR WITH KIDS MY OWN AGE.	A	B
3. I AM LONELY VERY OFTEN.	A	B
4. OTHER KIDS THINK I AM A GOOD STUDENT.	A	B
5. MOST PEOPLE ARE BETTER LIKED THAN I AM.	A	B
6. I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO STICK TO ONE PROJECT FOR VERY LONG.	A	B
7. I OFTEN GET DISCOURAGED IN SCHOOL.	A	B
8. I HAVE VERY FEW FRIENDS IN SCHOOL.	A	B
9. I HAVE A LOT OF SELF CONTROL.	A	B
10. MY TEACHERS MAKE ME FEEL I AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH.	A	B
11. SCHOOL WORK IS FAIRLY EASY FOR ME.	A	B
12. I OFTEN WISH I HAD MORE FRIENDS.	A	B
13. I WOULD LIKE TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL.	A	B
14. I WISH I WERE A DIFFERENT PERSON.	A	B
15. TEACHERS EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM ME.	A	B

		TRUE	NOT TRUE
16.	I FORGET MOST OF WHAT I LEARN.	A	B
17.	I DON'T SEEM TO FIT IN AT THIS SCHOOL.	A	B
18.	OTHER STUDENTS SEEM HAPPIER THAN I AM.	A	B
19.	NO ONE REALLY CARES MUCH ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.	A	B
20.	I AM SATISFIED WITH MYSELF.	A	B
21.	I AM USUALLY SHY AND SELF CONSCIOUS IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS.	A	B
22.	I HAVE DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING CRITICISM.	A	B
23.	SOMETIMES I THINK I AM NO GOOD AT ALL.	A	B
24.	I ENJOY GOING TO THIS SCHOOL.	A	B
25.	THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS ABOUT MYSELF I'D CHANGE IF I COULD.	A	B